

Joyspreaders Unlimited

How Radio Helped the Smith Family to Provide a Brighter Christmas for Four Thousand People

"WE want 200 'goodfellows' of Wellington to provide cheer for 200 families that are in desperate need. Do not send us money; send us your name and we shall send you the name and address of a deserving case for which you can provide Christmas cheer. You will attend to the case personally and see where your money or gifts actually go. Just send your name to Mr. Smith, 22W, Wellington."

This appeal was broadcast by Station 22W, Wellington, only ten days before Christmas. Thus the great Smith family movement was launched and immediately set about its work of alleviating the distress in the city. The man who brought the idea to Wellington, though a well-known business man, prefers to remain behind the soubriquet of Mr. Smith. Recently, when in Sydney, he saw parcels being distributed to the poor, and, becoming interested, made further inquiries. He learned that the Smith family has been flourishing there for eight years and has grown into a huge organisation for succouring families in distress. People who volunteer their services take under their personal care one or perhaps more deserving cases—usually children—and tend for them, providing those extras that mean all the difference between life and a pitiful existence, or perhaps even death.

The success of the scheme can be set down largely to personal contact and the sinking of the benefactor's identity behind the name of the Smith family. After his return to Wellington, Mr. Smith, who was convinced that some such organisation should be operating in New Zealand, happened to be listening to 22W making an appeal for 200 shillings to help the Mayor's fund. Immediately he made an offer to provide £200 if his scheme could be put into operation.

It was. An appeal for "goodfellows" and contributions—not money—was made per medium of Station 22W, and was supported by

the Press. So magnificent was the response that within a few days the proposed assistance for 200 families was fully assured and offers of assistance were still pouring in. Furthermore, cash was coming to light in a remarkable way,

despite the fact that it was not asked for—but it was nevertheless very useful. The idea of Christmas hampers for families other than those which could be personally succoured occurred—and the result was that on Christmas morning 471 families had the unexpected joy of Christmas cheer. In those hampers were all the essentials of a Christmas—including toys for the children and cigarettes for father.

In each hamper was a very simple Christmas greeting, printed on a card supplied by a printer Smith. "Wishing you a merry Xmas and brighter days for 1932, from the Smith Family Joyspreaders (N.Z.), Unlimited." And at the bottom, "We hope it will be your good fortune to help others next Xmas."

The size of the hampers was made possible only by the co-operation of those from whom the goods were purchased, and each hamper represented goods that, were they purchased through the ordinary channels, would have cost over £2.

Over £560 was received, mostly in small amounts, toward the hampers. Many of the donations were obviously made at a sacrifice. Children were among the most willing givers, and many gifts of toys and money-boxes, containing as much as a year's savings, were handed in to serve as a reminder to Santa Claus that the true spirit of Christmas still exists.

Money was sent through the post without covering letter, name or address, and as much as £4 came in one letter in this manner.

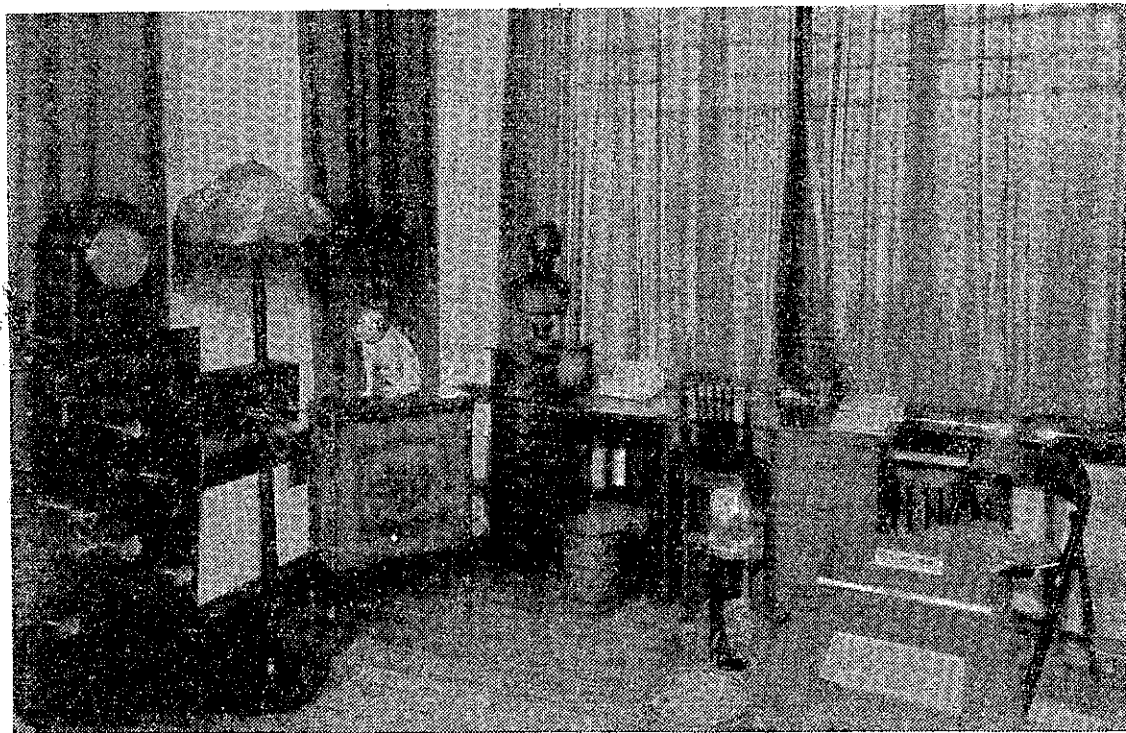
SO great was the response that it was found that even after Christmas cheer had been provided for nearly four thousand persons, there was still money to spare, and orders for meat and groceries have been and are still being issued. When investigation proves that a family is in need of essentials, the orders have been given through the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, whose indefatigable secretary personally investigates every case brought to her notice.

One of the most pleasing features of the movement has been the large number of letters received from the recipients of assistance. The obvious sincerity of these letters and their tragic (Concluded on page 2)

A Win for the All Blacks

AN interesting incident occurred when the Sydney Smiths, per medium of station 2BL, challenged the combined Melbourne and New Zealand Smiths to provide for more families than they would. The contest was jokingly referred to as being one between the Waratahs and the All Blacks, the 2BL announcer remarking that while on the many occasions the two had met, the All Blacks had usually been the victors, this contest would fully test their mettle. No more was heard of the challenge until Christmas, when the Wellington Smiths sent over a statement of the number of families attended.

As we go to press, we learn that a cable has been received by Mr. Smith, of Wellington, to the effect that once again the All Blacks have beaten the Waratahs!



22W's main studio, from whence the appeals to "goodfellows" were broadcast. In the right foreground may be seen the microphone, while on the top of the monitor panel on the left is the studio clock whose silvery chimes are so familiar to listeners.